

## **The Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (Cycle A) Homily**

St. William, Champion | June 14, 2020

DT 8:2-3, 14B-16A | 1 COR 10:16-17 | JN 6:51-58

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Sometimes it is what you don't say that matters. I remember a story about an editorial discussing local politics, in which the author stated that "Half the politicians in town are crooks." After a number of angry phone calls and numerous threats to the management of the paper, the author was given an ultimatum to publish a retraction. The next day's paper read: "Half the politicians in town are not crooks."

As important as actions are, words do matter. How many times as kids have we used the old line, "Sticks and stones can break my bones, but names will never hurt me." Of course, right afterward, we would fret about what was said in the privacy of our room.

That lesson has not been lost in the celebration of our liturgy. Whether we realize it or not, what we say and don't say affects how we think, how we believe, and how we act. That is the reason why we've had multiple revisions of our rituals – because we are aware of the power that words have.

Today, as we celebrate the Eucharist, we hear only a simple sentence: “The Body of Christ.” There are two things I’d like to focus on:

First, we purposely don’t say the words “sign”, “symbol”, or “represent”. It is our belief that Christ is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. We believe that when we receive, it is the real presence of Christ. This has been a core belief of our Church since it was formed. Once consecrated, the Eucharist contains the presence of Christ.

Second, we purposely don’t say the words “This is”... Why? Because while Christ is present under the forms of bread and wine, he is actually present in another way – he is present in those who receive him. As we receive, each one of us becomes a living tabernacle. We carry Christ with us. Over time, His presence transforms us as a community of faith – at least to the extent that we will allow – to become the Body of Christ ourselves.

For most of us, the Eucharist is one of the strongest parts of our Catholic identity. It wouldn’t be our normal Sunday worship without

Holy Communion. These past few months have served as a reminder of how fortunate we are to be able to celebrate Eucharist on a weekly basis.

As we continue our journey back to normal life, may we always be grateful for the opportunity we have, and also willingly embrace the responsibility we have not only to receive the Body of Christ, but more importantly, to become the Body of Christ in our world.

As we go forth each week, may we allow our reception of the Eucharist to transform us so that we become the real presence of Christ...

- To our spouses and our children...
- To our brothers and our sisters...
- To our neighbors and communities...
- To our workplaces and schools...
- To those who hunger for justice...
- To those who thirst for forgiveness...
- To the unborn child.

- To the immigrant and the stranger...
- To the poor and the vulnerable...
- To the lonely and the forgotten...

This week, may we allow the Christ who gave himself totally to us, without holding anything back, to flow through our thoughts and words, and motivate us to action in a world in need of His love.